



P.B. 5818 - Patentlaan 2
2280 HV Rijswijk (ZH)
☎ (070) 340 2040
Tx 31651 epo nl
FAX (070) 340 3016

Europäisches
Patentamt
Zweigstelle in
Den Haag
Recherchen-
abteilung

European
Patent Office
Branch at
The Hague
Search
Division

Office européen
des brevets
Département à
La Haye
Division de la
recherche

HOFFMANN - EITLE
Patent- und Rechtsanwälte
Arabellastrasse 4
81925 München
ALLEMAGNE

EINGEGANGEN

09. Dez. 2003

HOFFMANN · EITLE, MÜNCHEN
PATENTANWÄLTE RECHTSANWÄLTE

Datum/Date

08.12.03

Zeichen/Ref./Réf.

99 298 a/jme

Anmeldung Nr./Application No./Demande n°//Patent Nr./Patent No./Brevet n°
03015652.5-2304/

Anmelder/Applicant/Demandeur//Patentinhaber/Proprietor/Titulaire
SEIKO EPSON CORPORATION

COMMUNICATION

The European Patent Office herewith transmits the partial European search report under Rule 46(1) EPC relating to the above-mentioned European patent application.

Copies of the documents cited in the search report are enclosed.

The applicant's attention is drawn to the following:

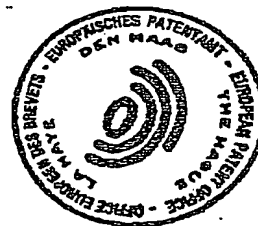
The search Division informs the applicant that if the European search report is also to cover inventions other than the invention first mentioned in the claims, a further search fee must be paid for each of these inventions, within ONE MONTH after notification of this communication.

If the application has been filed up to 30 June 1999, the search fee in force before 01 July 1999 (EUR 869,-) or the equivalent applicable on the date of payment is payable.

This applies also to the search fees requested under Rule 46(1) EPC:

See also OJ EPO 06/1999, 405.

- ☐ The abstract was modified by the Search Division and the definitive text is attached to the present communication.
- ☒ Additional set(s) of copies of the documents cited in the European search report is (are) enclosed as well.



Note to users of the automatic debiting procedure:

Unless the EPO receives prior instructions to the contrary, the search fee(s) will be debited on the last day of the period for payment. For further details see the Arrangements for the automatic debiting procedure, Supplement to OJ EPO 02/1999.

REGISTERED LETTER



European Patent
Office

PARTIAL EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

under Rule 46, paragraph 1 of the European Patent Convention

Application Number

EP 03 01 5652

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int.Cl.7)
A	EP 0 732 631 A (KONISHIROKU PHOTO IND) 18 September 1996 (1996-09-18) * the whole document *	1-17	B41J2/41 G03G15/00
A	EP 0 589 131 A (TOKYO SHIBAURA ELECTRIC CO) 30 March 1994 (1994-03-30) * the whole document *	1-17	
A	US 5 754 919 A (TONAI KEIKO ET AL) 19 May 1998 (1998-05-19) * the whole document *	1-17	
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.7)
			B41J G03G
LACK OF UNITY OF INVENTION			
The Search Division considers that the present European patent application does not comply with the requirements of unity of invention and relates to several inventions or groups of inventions, namely:			
see sheet B			
The present partial European search report has been drawn up for those parts of the European patent application which relate to the invention first mentioned in the claims.			
Place of search	Date of completion of the search	Examiner	
MUNICH	18 November 2003	Callan, F	
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS			
X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document		T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document	



The Search Division considers that the present European patent application does not comply with the requirements of unity of invention and relates to several inventions or groups of inventions, namely:

1. Claims: 1-17

An image forming apparatus comprising

an image carrier...;

a toner carrier...;

image forming means...;

wherein optimization is excuted which requires the formation of a toner image as a patch image and to optimize density control factors influencing image density based on the patch image density.

2. Claims: 18-31

An image forming apparatus comprising

an image carrier...;

a toner carrier...;

image forming means...;

wherein idling of the toner carrier is excuted which requires rotating said toner carrier at least one revolution or more.

The common concept linking independent claims 1,10,11,15,16 &17 with independent claims 18,21,27 &30, is the following;

An image forming apparatus comprising

an image carrier...;

a toner carrier...; and

image forming means...

However, this common concept is not novel; see for example document D1, Abs & Fig 1.

Therefore the above inventions are not so linked as to form a single general inventive concept.

Note: Independent claims 1,10,16 & 17 posess all the features of both inventions.

**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
ON EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION NO.**

EP 03 01 5652

This annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned European search report.
The members are as contained in the European Patent Office EDP file on
The European Patent Office is in no way liable for these particulars which are merely given for the purpose of information.

18-11-2003

Patent document cited in search report		Publication date		Patent family member(s)	Publication date
EP 0732631	A	18-09-1996	JP	8254861 A	01-10-1996
			EP	0732631 A2	18-09-1996
			US	5808651 A	15-09-1998
EP 0589131	A	30-03-1994	JP	6102734 A	15-04-1994
			JP	6110285 A	22-04-1994
			JP	6110286 A	22-04-1994
			EP	0589131 A2	30-03-1994
			US	5351107 A	27-09-1994
US 5754919	A	19-05-1998	JP	8166700 A	25-06-1996